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President: Mr. Errázuriz (Vice-President) ..... (Chile)

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In the absence of Mr. Ali (Malaysia), Mr. Errázuriz (Chile), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance (*continued*) (E/2010/88-A/65/82)

1. **Mr. Heller** (Observer for Mexico) said that the Secretary-General's report on strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (E/2010/88-A/65/82) was particularly important in that it emphasized a multidimensional approach. Efforts to provide humanitarian solutions to the effects of large-scale, man-made problems, such as armed conflicts and climate change, had been fragmented by the increasing number and impact of other crises, such as the food, financial and energy crises. The traditional issues of concern, such as armed conflicts, should no longer be viewed in and of themselves as the cause of humanitarian emergencies, but rather as the result of a combination of factors.

2. His delegation was increasingly concerned about the lack of secure access to affected populations and how it undermined international efforts to provide aid in high-risk environments. General Assembly resolution 46/182 highlighted the importance of providing humanitarian assistance in cases of disaster with due respect for the principles, of humanity, neutrality and impartiality. Those principles were based on established international laws that protected the rights to life and integrity of the person. State and humanitarian actors therefore had a solid legal basis available to guide their aid actions in cases of natural disasters.

3. His delegation did not believe that the response to emergency humanitarian needs should be broadened to include an approach based on degrees of vulnerability. Such an approach would be a declaration that prevention and early-warning systems had failed. The focus should instead be on reducing vulnerability, which was a factor in all societies, and on strengthening capacity-building mechanisms to prevent situations from "gradually" becoming serious, chronic or catastrophic. Development strategies should emphasize ways of identifying and mitigating the risk factors responsible for humanitarian crises.

4. The Central Emergency Response Fund offered the type of rigorous follow-up and accountability system required to provide an efficient humanitarian response to emergencies. His Government affirmed its commitment to the Fund and in addition would be contributing human and financial resources to the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination team and was in the process of formalizing its participation in the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group. His Government would also continue to support the efforts of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the International Committee of the Red Cross to build Mexico's capacity to provide international emergency aid.

5. **Mr. Sergeyev** (Ukraine) said that progress had been made in promoting a coordinated approach to humanitarian issues, as evidenced by the global response to the earthquake in Haiti. His own Government had contributed half a million dollars to the Central Emergency Response Fund for Haiti's recovery. However, coordination between United Nations agencies and its operational activities system still needed to be strengthened, without prejudice to the principles of neutrality, humanity and respect for the sovereignty of States in humanitarian assistance efforts.

6. Risk management strategies should work to integrate disaster risk mitigation into sustainable development approaches. In that sense, the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction was a significant framework for the international community to develop resilience to natural, technological and environmental disasters. Ensuring efficient transitions from humanitarian relief activities to long-term development processes was also critical.

7. Nearly 25 years after the Chernobyl disaster, there was still evidence of its complex, negative and long-term impacts in Ukraine. In that sense, continuing the timely implementation of projects under the Decade of Recovery and Sustainable Development of the Affected Regions initiative was vital. His delegation also looked forward to support from the international donor community, and hoped that the aftermath of the Chernobyl accident would be appropriately addressed in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for Ukraine for the period 2012-2016 and in the country programmes managed by the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Development Programme.

8. His delegation expressed appreciation for the promptness with which the United Nations had responded to the request for assistance in addressing the emergency situation in the Ukrainian town of Kalush, which had been declared an "emergency ecological situation zone". Potassium ore mining and processing activities were affecting the environment and people in the area, and the United Nations and the European Commission had conducted a joint technical scoping mission in March 2010 to investigate the risks and the possible spread of hazardous waste. The mission had helped the national authorities to identify the best solutions to the situation, as well as short- and long-term measure to reduce the threats.

9. **Mr. Nofukuka** (Observer for South Africa) said that the consequences of the natural disasters which had occurred in the first half of 2010 required the continued and focused support of the international humanitarian community, despite the continuing financial and economic crisis. Building and strengthening national and local preparedness, prevention, resilience, mitigation and response capacity remained critical.

10. His country had helped to address the needs of affected countries through its annual contribution to the Central Emergency Response Fund and contributions to the World Food Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and would continue to do so within its modest means. Given the increasing financial pressure on agencies that addressed humanitarian emergencies, donor countries should increase their generous support by providing multi-year, non-earmarked additional resources to meet global humanitarian challenges in a way that was not to the detriment of resources made available for international cooperation for development.

11. His delegation agreed with the Secretary-General that consideration should be given to strategies to bring about a shift within the humanitarian system from a "shock-driven" approach towards a more needs-based and vulnerability-led response. Such a shift should include a stronger focus on so-called forgotten emergencies and further debate on how to define "vulnerabilities" and the triggers for responding to appeals for assistance, all within the broader context of the increased challenges posed by the impact of climate change and increasing global food insecurity.

12. National and international humanitarian agencies should continue to deliver support to Member States in line with the core humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality and neutrality agreed to in General Assembly resolution 46/182 and the principle of independence as adopted in its resolution 58/114. Adherence to the principles embodied in those resolutions would go a long way towards providing an enabling environment in which humanitarian actors could obtain access to affected communities and deliver assistance.

13. His delegation commended the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for its efforts to improve the international humanitarian response capacity system, including through the use of the cluster approach. His country also urged all relevant international humanitarian entities to continue to work with the Office to enhance the coordination, effectiveness, and efficiency of humanitarian assistance.

14. It was essential to strengthen humanitarian assistance to people living under foreign occupation, and he called on all humanitarian actors to cooperate fully with the United Nations and other humanitarian agencies and organizations and to ensure the safe and unhindered access of humanitarian personnel and delivery of supplies and equipment, in order to allow humanitarian personnel to perform efficiently their task of assisting affected civilian populations.

15. His delegation hoped that the draft resolution concerning the item under consideration (E/2010/L.15) would be adopted by consensus.

16. **Mr. Al Bayati** (Iraq) pointed out that the numbers of internally displaced persons in Iraq and Iraqi refugees living abroad provided in the report before the Council (A/65/82-E/2010/88) were much higher than the numbers indicated in the Secretary-General's most recent report prepared pursuant to paragraph 6 of Security Council resolution 1883 (2009) (S/2010/240). Moreover, contrary to information contained in paragraphs 23 and 25 of document A/65/82-E/2010/88, there had been no attacks targeting United Nations civilian personnel or NGO personnel in any part of Iraq during the period 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009.

17. His Government had worked hard to facilitate the voluntary return of Iraqi refugees and internally displaced Iraqis to their original homes and to ameliorate their social, health and living conditions in

the interest of achieving national reconciliation, unifying Iraqi society and establishing the rule of law. Given the significant improvement in the security situation following the implementation of security plans in all regions of the country, it hoped to close its file of internally displaced persons permanently before the end of 2010. He listed the many steps the Government had taken which had rapidly and effectively contributed to the voluntary return of both the internally displaced and those living abroad.

18. **Mr. Suárez** (Observer for Colombia), commenting on the Secretary-General's report (A/65/82-E/2010/88), stressed the importance of providing national and local institutions with capacity-building support, including staff training, adequate institutional and technical resources and support in coordinating partnerships with civil society. Such efforts would also ensure a more efficient use of funding for humanitarian assistance. Regarding the consolidation of the various mechanisms for assistance within the United Nations, he emphasized the need to integrate national Governments' plans into those efforts at coherence. The results of the independent evaluation of the cluster approach conducted in several countries had revealed the importance of coordination both among cluster members, and with national structures. His delegation looked forward to the new management plan that had been developed in response to the evaluation.

19. Needs assessments were an indispensable component for providing an effective humanitarian response. His delegation urged the United Nations to collaborate more closely with Governments when determining needs, as national institutions kept detailed records on affected populations. In that regard, he expressed concern over the ambiguous data on the number of displaced persons in Colombia provided in the Secretary-General's report. The figures were derived from a period extending over 13 years, which did not reflect the significant reduction in displaced persons that had been recently achieved through improved security measures and the demobilization of armed groups. The data also did not reflect the Government's investment in the return and social and economic stabilization of victims through the implementation of a multisectoral policy and a budget of over US$ 500 million annually over the past four years. His delegation trusted that future reports of the Secretary-General would be more accurate and comprehensive on the issue of internal displacement in Colombia.

20. He recognized the achievements of the Central Emergency Response Fund in helping to provide humanitarian responses, including in his country. Colombia's Government had supported the Fund's objectives through financial contributions in 2007, 2009 and 2010.

21. He joined the condemnations of attacks against humanitarian personnel and commended the Emergency Response Coordinator's efforts to promote structured engagement as a significant means of strengthening security. As in all matters related to humanitarian assistance, coordination with national Governments should be an essential part of that process. From the outset, humanitarian assistance should contribute to a reconstruction process that would ensure post-emergency stability and contribute to long-term solutions. In that sense, his delegation supported the Secretary-General's call for greater coordination between humanitarian actors, development partners and national authorities to ensure an appropriate transition to sustainable development.

22. **Mr. Petranto** (Observer for Indonesia) said that while the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs was essential to the provision assistance in emergency situations, the ultimate goal should be to create self-sufficiency and resilience among all countries. Governments needed to be able to prevent disasters from reversing development gains. However, not all countries were equipped to establish the national monitoring system such an effort required. Development and humanitarian actors should therefore be proactive in strengthening preparedness and prevention capacities as part of their efforts. The Secretary-General's report had highlighted the dual challenges of operating in a high-risk environment and dealing with vulnerability. A balance was required between responding to events and reducing risks.

23. United Nations operations should remain engaged with local communities in order to gauge risk factors and ensure safety. Strategic cooperation between humanitarian and development actors and affected populations was also key to reducing vulnerabilities. Such work should include capacity-building and changing local attitudes to approach disasters proactively through risk management measures.

24. Indonesia was working in regional partnerships to strengthen national capacities to address humanitarian situations. Access to sufficient resources and trust among humanitarian actors were essential to successful operations. In that regard, Member States' recent discussions on humanitarian issues had reflected the various partnerships that had evolved on the ground.

25. **Ms. Kalamwina** (Zambia) said that her country had not been spared by natural disasters in the past year, with floods affecting 10 per cent of all households, displacing thousands, causing food shortages and forcing most of the poor into extreme poverty, compounded by disease and unemployment. Together with NGOs and other partners, Zambia was instituting social protection programmes for vulnerable groups, providing more food security for farmers, welfare for destitute households in the form of educational, health and social support, cash grants to individuals and households living in extreme poverty, and special protection to children in difficult circumstances, such as street children or child victims of gender-based violence.

26. After stating that donors had a duty to honour pledges to the Central Emergency Response Fund, an important tool that needed an adequate and predictable flow of resources, she observed that capacity-building and preparedness were as important as relief activities, and the developing countries and the regional institutions helping them needed support in those areas. At the same time, coordination arrangements were needed to organize the growing number of those now working to help build capacity.

27. **Ms. Bethel** (Bahamas) said that risk management and the reduction of vulnerability was a high priority for the Bahamas, which was no stranger to humanitarian challenges, both natural and man-made. The international humanitarian system would undergird that process, as recent encouraging improvements moved it from a shock-driven to a more effective needs-based response.

28. The Bahamas was heartened by the continued active engagement of the United Nations in Haiti over the past several years. The incisive, informative report of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti (E/2010/CRP.5) could serve as a useful guide not only for the Council but for the entire international community as it worked with the Haitian authorities and people, who must ultimately be in control of the recovery and reconstruction process. The Group's report put the spotlight on some of the best ways to promote effective and sustainable development support to Haiti, suggesting specific measures and approaches. Stability and security in Haiti were crucial, for without them social or economic progress would be stymied. A coordinated approach by the numerous NGOs working in Haiti, in accordance with the Government's priorities, must be the fundamental guiding principle for assistance to that country.

29. **Mr. Loulichki** (Morocco) said that the Secretary-General's report underscored urgent humanitarian needs, including those of one billion people affected by the food crisis and 27 million internally displaced by armed conflicts. The combined effects of armed conflicts, natural disasters and food and financial crises created a situation which pricked the collective conscience of the international community and put its humanity to the test.

30. While the international response to the earthquake in Haiti had been massive, much remained to be done before the population could again live a normal existence. The lessons learned by the United Nations system and other organizations from that painful experience would no doubt improve the operational response to natural disasters in the future.

31. The continuing attacks on humanitarian personnel noted in the Secretary-General's report called for a response from Member States, and his delegation condemned all such acts of aggression. It hoped that the forthcoming report of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs would suggest ways of safeguarding the capacity of humanitarian organizations to act effectively.

32. Conflict situations were responsible for increasing humanitarian needs. In Africa, matters were made worse by chronic drought conditions, resulting in massive displacements of populations and subsequent conditions of insecurity, famine and ill health, particularly among women and children.

33. Humanitarian assistance organizations must have access to affected populations, in line with the core humanitarian principles of impartiality, neutrality, humanity and independence. They must therefore dissociate themselves entirely from all political agendas and remain transparent in their motives. His delegation supported an approach whereby the United Nations would continue to intervene on an ad hoc

basis, while also managing structural, progressive vulnerabilities, such as drought or the effects of the food and financial crises. The humanitarian response in cases of gradually developing situations would be deployed in the event of a breakdown, as determined by reliable and precise indicators within a framework for long-term development. That approach required an emphasis on preventive measures, preparation and strengthened partnerships between Governments, development actors and other stakeholders.

34. His delegation welcomed the fact that the Central Emergency Response Fund continued to respond to crisis situations, despite the limited funding available. Assistance efforts at the national level should focus on building capacity for disaster risk reduction and disaster preparedness. He praised the effort made by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to work with national authorities to strengthen government capacities.

35. His delegation commended the "one-stop shop" approach, which promoted direct and continuous communication between local authorities and humanitarian and development actors. Such partnerships placed national and local actors at the centre of humanitarian activities, which allowed for a more efficient use of aid that responded to affected population's true needs.

36. The success and impact of international humanitarian assistance depended on the mobilization of logistical and financial resources as much as it did on human resources. Despite the fact that contributions had increased to nearly $7 billion in 2009, funding still fell short of needs. United Nations efforts to streamline costs and train humanitarian actors should receive the support of Member States through continuous funding.

37. **Mr. Mercado** (United States of America) said that perhaps the most challenging of the many disasters with which the United Nations had dealt in the past year had been the earthquake in Haiti, which had affected millions of lives and caused damage estimated at nearly $8 billion. In the period since, significant progress had been made in providing emergency assistance. Working together, the Government, the United Nations, the Red Cross Movement, international and national NGOs and the Haitian people themselves had delivered humanitarian relief in the form of food, clean water and medical care to the millions affected.

38. Yet much remained to be done. It was not solely a question of financial resources, however, but also of rethinking the ways in which assistance was delivered. All stakeholders in the relief, recovery and development of Haiti must design innovative programmes so that the aid could be used to transform the country by building institutional capacity, reducing vulnerabilities and strengthening Haiti's capacity to provide for itself.

39. Similarly, the Organization should strive to reform the international humanitarian system at every opportunity. A recent study of the performance of the international humanitarian system by the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action had paralleled the Secretary-General's own assessment in his report (A/65/82-E/2010/88). International humanitarian assistance could be only as effective as its leadership. The humanitarian coordinators system in particular needed persons selected for their experience and background in disaster risk reduction and disaster response who could be promptly deployed in the aftermath of a large-scale disaster. All too often the United Nations had moved too slowly to shift from development mode to disaster-response mode during an emergency.

40. The continued work of the Global Humanitarian Platform had strengthened much-needed partnerships between the United Nations agencies, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs, whose inclusion in the United Nations humanitarian country teams was a positive development, for they brought a wealth of knowledge and experience that would only strengthen the response to crises.

41. Another challenge was the ability to operate in high-risk environments. Attacks against humanitarian aid workers by armed groups were occurring with alarming frequency in place like Somalia, the Sudan and Afghanistan. That was to be deplored, but at the same time, creative and effective solutions must be found to continue the delivery of humanitarian assistance in such countries, and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs was to be applauded for its efforts in that regard.

42. **Mr. Porretti** (Argentina) said that the Secretary-General's report and the Council's subsequent discussions, as well as recent experiences in Chile, China and Haiti, had made clear that the changing nature of humanitarian emergencies demanded

flexibility of approach and creativity to improve the efficiency of assistance efforts, from the time of the initial response through the subsequent reconstruction and development stages.

43. The international community should continue to seek financing mechanisms of a type that provided timely access to funds, such as the Central Emergency Response Fund. In addition, the recommendations of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction should be implemented to reduce vulnerability, and prevention efforts should include the participation of civil society and relevant State agencies. Furthermore, all international humanitarian assistance should be based on the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, and the work should be coordinated by United Nations agencies in accordance with a mandate agreed with the national authorities. In that regard, it was vital that States should work to create unimpeded access to crisis-affected areas.

44. Argentina had provided continuous support for initiatives to ensure the security of humanitarian personnel. His delegation was in full agreement with the notion that humanitarian assistance should be of a fundamentally civilian nature, and that any military involvement should be undertaken with the consent of the affected State, in line with international law.

45. In terms of facilitating the provision of assistance through the development of common procedures across countries, Argentina had been promoting a regional focus, including hosting a third regional meeting on international humanitarian assistance mechanisms. The meeting had served as a forum to identify regional challenges, share experiences and consolidate joint efforts.

46. **Ms. del Águila-Castillo** (Guatemala) said that, as a country that had benefited from United Nations humanitarian assistance on three occasions in the past five years, Guatemala would be remiss if it did not acknowledge the superb work of the United Nations system, which had responded rapidly to the dual disaster of a volcanic eruption and a hurricane in Guatemala, as it had done in the natural disasters that regularly affected the region.

47. While still receiving humanitarian aid, Guatemala had offered help when the earthquake struck Haiti. The possibility of being a beneficiary country one day and a contributing country the next was at the very root of humanitarian assistance, which was inspired by a sentiment of solidarity but at the same time required complex administrative and logistical skills — skills that the United Nations system displayed to a high degree.

48. **Mr. Dornig** (Liechtenstein) said that the ability to deliver humanitarian assistance to populations in need was increasingly jeopardized by deliberate attacks on humanitarian workers, facilities and vehicles. Such attacks were political in nature and conflict-related for humanitarian agents were often not perceived as neutral, and the changing nature of warfare was giving rise to criminality and banditry. To increase the acceptance of humanitarian assistance in high-risk environments, its delivery must be dissociated from political and military goals and underpinned by a constant outreach to community leaders and local authorities, and it must be complemented by appropriate, sufficiently funded security. The new United Nations security management approach and its broader security collaboration with international organizations and NGOs in the "Saving Lives Together" framework were most welcome.

49. Globally, an estimated 27 million had been internally displaced by armed conflicts. Humanitarian operations in high-risk environments had often failed to address the different vulnerabilities of women, girls, boys and men. Women, particularly, were vulnerable in situations of displacement as they were forced to adopt new strategies to provide for themselves and their families that included prostitution, trading sex for food or leaving the relative safety of refugee camps to collect firewood. Liechtenstein, in cooperation with the Women's Refugee Commission, had hosted a panel discussion on such questions as the link between gender-based violence and livelihoods. One of the main findings had been that programmes must address the shift in household power dynamics, for men in displacement settings were likely to lose their status while women often took on additional roles and responsibilities. It should be noted that in addition to exacerbating gender-based violence, the indoor use of firewood in humanitarian settings caused respiratory infections that killed more people every year than malaria and hastened environmental degradation. The response to the cross-cutting fuel issue had tended to be minimal, and Liechtenstein therefore welcomed the endorsement of a set of multisectoral guidance tools by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, which allowed clusters or agencies to deal with safe access to

appropriate cooking fuel from the start of every emergency.

50. **Mr. Momen** (Bangladesh) said that his own country had been suffering from the most extreme vulnerability to climate change for some time, because of its low-lying, deltaic, monsoonal situation. Bangladesh's contribution to climate change was negligible, yet it was one of its worst victims: while the scientific prediction was that by 2050 one in 45 people would be displaced by climate change worldwide, in Bangladesh the figure would be one in seven. The Secretary-General's report indicated that the international response to natural disasters tended to be less robust than it was to armed conflicts, but his delegation hoped that more resources would be dedicated to dealing with natural disasters. Bangladesh had developed some good practices in risk reduction and disaster mitigation that it would be happy to share through South-South, South-North or even triangular cooperation.

51. Many developing countries, particularly the least developed, lacked a rapid-response capacity and adequate resources, especially given the frequency and magnitude of recent natural disasters such as the devastating cyclones in Bangladesh, where rehabilitation was continuing four years later and some remote areas had not yet been reached. Consequently, local government institutions had been playing the usual role of first and sustained responder, requiring much coordination.

52. Planning for humanitarian operations required a good understanding of the socio-economic environment of the country affected. Moreover, assistance should be needs-based rather than supply-driven. In that connection, it was much more economical to procure goods and food from local markets in the affected areas.

53. **Mr. Jaiswal** (India) said that international humanitarian law and the guiding principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality set out in the annex to General Assembly resolution 46/182 provided the legal foundation for humanitarian operations and must be respected. Member States had the primary responsibility to provide assistance in emergencies but might not always have necessary means to do so. The United Nations had to complement the efforts of Member States, and nations must cooperate among themselves, in finding collective solutions. Furthermore, there must be bilateral, regional and international cooperation not only during the emergency response but throughout the stages of effective disaster management: disaster preparedness, the use of early-warning systems and relief and rehabilitation.

54. The United Nations must improve its coordination and delivery of international humanitarian assistance by increasing the operational capacities of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and of the United Nations funds and programmes and through greater accountability. The Central Emergency Response Fund should be made into a viable, dynamic mechanism for responding to disasters; its institution testified to the interest that all Member States had in the humanitarian agenda, and his own Government was committed to contributing half a million dollars annually for the period 2009-2011.

55. In the case of disasters, prevention was better than cure, and risk reduction and preparedness needed to be mainstreamed into development policies. India aimed to develop a holistic, proactive, multi-disaster and technology-driven strategy, resting on community-based disaster management, capacity development, consolidation of past initiatives and best practices, and cooperation with national, regional and international agencies. In addition, it was committed to creating an institutional and legal framework for disaster management and an enabling regulatory environment together with a compliance regime.

56. **Monsignor Bharanikulangara** (Observer for the Holy See) observed that his delegation, while supporting national ownership and country-led leadership in humanitarian activities, stressed that, in the exercise of responsible sovereignty, public officials had the duty to ensure that timely humanitarian assistance was delivered to victims irrespective of their social status, creed or ideology, because respect for the basic rights of individuals, their families and communities must be upheld. Of particular concern were efforts to use humanitarian catastrophes as opportunities to exploit those in need for institutional or personal gain.

57. In addition, international humanitarian law demanded the protection of humanitarian personnel and the provision of unimpeded access to people in need. It was thus the responsibility of political and military personnel to ensure that measures were taken

to provide humanitarian personnel with safe access to people in need and to protect them against criminally motivated attacks, kidnappings and abduction.

58. The Holy See appreciated the work of all United Nations humanitarian personnel and other associated actors who were engaged in high-risk situations and rendering humanitarian assistance without regard for their own safety. Those persons needed the ongoing support and assistance of the international community.

59. The scale and generosity of the contributions in cash and in kind that had flowed into Haiti during the recent earthquake demonstrated the commitment of the international community to help victims and to rebuild communities. The timely call for internationalized engagement and an enhanced multilateral response under the leadership of the United Nations had produced notable results.

60. Emergency situations did not negate the requirements of accountability and transparency in humanitarian activities. Responsibly managing resources and preserving the credibility and accountability of the humanitarian response would encourage donors and beneficiaries alike.

61. While acknowledging the great value of the contribution of the United Nations humanitarian agencies in humanitarian emergencies, his delegation emphasized the important role also played by faith-based organizations, regional and local NGOs and civil society. During the recent tragic earthquake in Haiti, it had been noted by the international media that the first actors on the scene extending humanitarian help had been those of the Catholic Church. Local organizations and civil society often had better knowledge of the conditions and local concerns and could facilitate easier access and efficient delivery of humanitarian assistance.

62. Along with material assistance, the psychological and spiritual strengthening of the victims, especially raising the morale of the most vulnerable, were important in natural and man-made disasters. The well-being and education of children merited special attention and humanitarian agents must help prevent exploitation, abuse or trafficking of them. Splitting up families, especially separating children from their parents, jeopardized communities, destroyed the psychological and social fabric of communities and left the victims in need of special assistance. Refugees, especially women and children, internally displaced persons, asylum-seekers and detainees needed to be guaranteed security and protection.

63. His delegation was concerned about vulnerable situations in a context of ongoing armed conflicts, community violence and terrorist attacks. Human rights violations, particularly sexual abuse, forced labour and the recruitment of child soldiers, were continuing concerns. The Holy See decried sex-based violence in humanitarian emergencies and called for legal protection of the victims and prosecution of the perpetrators.

64. Equally important were the rehabilitation of victims, the reinsertion of children into educational systems, the reunion of families and the reconstruction of labour markets. In addition, capacity-building to respond to disasters and humanitarian response preparedness were fundamental, including the drafting of guidelines on civil-military coordination and the protection of civilians.

65. In the light of the long-standing experience of the Catholic Church in addressing humanitarian needs in every part of the world, he underlined the urgency of strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance within the United Nations. His delegation committed itself to the continued provision of non-partisan humanitarian assistance to victims in cooperation with all stakeholders engaged in such activities.

66. **Ms. Mosquini** (Observer for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies) said that strengthening the coordination of humanitarian assistance remained a top priority for the her organization. Effective, coordinated humanitarian action became all the more necessary as humanitarian needs became more complex, as was occurring at present owing to the global food, energy, financial and economic crises and a confluence of natural and man-made hazards.

67. To enhance coordination and strengthen response capacity within the international Red Cross and Red Crescent movement, the Federation had developed a portfolio of response tools which could be adapted to each particular humanitarian setting. For example, the Emergency Response Units (ERUs) brought together highly trained teams of Red Cross or Red Crescent specialists and pre-packed sets of standardized equipment ready for immediate use in emergencies. They filled gaps in the first phase of the emergency

response by providing essential health services, water and sanitation as well as logistics and telecommunications support. A total of 21 such units had been deployed in Haiti alone, the largest number ever deployed to a single country.

68. The Federation's investment in building its own internal response capacity was complemented by its equal commitment to coordination with the wider humanitarian community, for example with the United Nations through the Inter-Agency Standing Committee.

69. Achievements in response capacity and coordination must be matched by equal advances in disaster preparedness and risk reduction, but appeals for funding in such areas generally fell on deaf ears. Why was it that an appeal to reinforce infrastructure before disaster struck was undersubscribed, when an appeal to reconstruct whole cities after the disaster was fully covered? Donors should be more aware of the value of prevention, in terms of both money saved and human suffering avoided.

70. The Federation was also continuing its efforts to build legal preparedness. The Guidelines for the Domestic Facilitation and Regulation of International Disaster Relief and Initial Recovery Assistance (IDRL Guidelines) had been adopted two years previously at the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, and over two dozen national review processes were using those Guidelines to examine strengths and weaknesses in national laws. As noted in the Secretary-General's report, the Federation had also continued to cooperate with the United Nations in assisting and encouraging States to use the Guidelines, by means such as the inclusion of Federation legal experts in United Nations preparedness missions to Peru, the Comoros and El Salvador, and cooperation in the delivery of regional training workshops in Almaty, Bangkok, Nairobi, Panama and Suva.

71. In line with the views expressed in the Secretary-General's report, the Federation affirmed the importance of a needs-based and vulnerability-led response in order to meet humanitarian needs in an equitable manner. In the context of emerging challenges, such as the humanitarian consequences of climate change and the impact of rapid urbanization, the international community must maintain its focus to reach the most vulnerable in society.

72. **Mr. De Looz Karageorgiades** (Observer for the Sovereign Military Order of Malta) said that, in keeping with its original mission of helping the sick, the poor and the abandoned, regardless of race, religion, or ethnicity, the Order would be guided by the conclusions and recommendations of the excellent report by the Secretary-General, particularly of his enunciation of the core humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence and the emphasis on improving national and local capabilities and disaster preparedness.

73. Malteser International, the Order's global humanitarian aid body, was supporting 200 projects in over 20 countries. It was particularly engaged in the Central African Republic and had been one of the first to bring medical aid to the victims of the January earthquake in Haiti, where it had provided humanitarian and medical assistance for years. To give priority to gender equality and prevent gender-based violence was also one of the Order's goals in pursuing its centuries-old objective of ending hunger, poverty and disease.

74. **Ms. Muedin** (Observer for the International Organization for Migration) observed that collaboration and coordination were of greatest relevance in situations of population displacement and sudden population movements. The issue of internal displacement was multifaceted, requiring many organizations to work collaboratively on different aspects. Several years into the implementation of the "cluster approach", and through its use in response to the earthquake in Haiti, tangible results had been seen in terms of collaboration and coordination, but the sheer magnitude of the catastrophe in Haiti had revealed a need for adjustments to the system in order to improve response. In particular, the need to better incorporate multidimensional and cross-cutting issues into the humanitarian response, such as those related to gender, land ownership, rubble removal or urban planning, appeared to be critical to the improvement of the system. Inter-cluster coordination and strong humanitarian leadership were key areas where improvements were necessary in order for the cluster system to achieve its full potential.

75. Another challenge in the context of the emergency response in Haiti related to the surge response capacity for the coordination of humanitarian assistance. Although all agencies had provided outstanding surge support in response to the earthquake, the magnitude of the disaster had limited its effectiveness. Procedures for rapid recruitment,

procurement and logistical support needed to be further improved.

76. As the cluster lead for camp coordination and camp management in natural disasters, ensuring that sites for internally displaced persons had adequate camp management support was a key priority for the organization. Areas of focus were strengthening community resilience, managing information regarding the sites and the affected populations, supporting partners carrying out coordination and management responsibilities, including national civil society and local authorities, ensuring uniform standards were met and liaising with local government and affected populations.

77. Climate change would have serious consequences for millions of people and their countries and communities in both the near and the more distant future. In that respect, the International Organization for Migration echoed the Secretary-General's call for "a shift [...] from a 'shock-driven' towards a more needs-based and vulnerability-led response" (A/65/82, para. 36). In particular, it should be stressed that while gradual environmental changes such as drought and desertification appeared to be a less obvious push factor for migration than extreme environmental events, it was those gradual processes that were expected to trigger most environmental migration in the longer term.

78. To pursue comprehensive approaches to environmental migration and to foster the needed synergies among the relevant disciplines, the International Organization for Migration had been working closely with a range of relevant actors, most notably with its humanitarian partners, including within the framework of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and with the agencies dealing with environment and development issues.

79. Her organization also wanted to take the opportunity to thank the Under-Secretary-General for his excellent work as the Emergency Relief Coordinator and to wish him success in his future endeavours.

80. **Mr. Gokcen** (Observer for the Organization of the Islamic Conference) observed that, according to estimates, almost half of the world's 42 million displaced people lived in the States members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. The socio-economic and political challenges caused by the population displacements were not easy to deal with either for the refugees or for the countries hosting them, and those difficulties undermined efforts to solve other political and security problems.

81. The Organization of the Islamic Conference had formally entered the humanitarian affairs domain with a coordination and operation capacity following a decision by the Islamic Summit in December 2005, which had mandated the Organization to play an increasingly active role in providing humanitarian aid and assistance after disasters. That mandate should be seen as complementary to the new vision of the Organization of the Islamic Conference emphasizing the importance of socio-economic development and modernization in the member States. Consequently, the General Secretariat had established a Humanitarian Affairs Department, which had subsequently responded to emergency and development needs in a number of countries and regions, including Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, Gaza, Indonesia, Iraq, the Niger, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Somalia, the Sudan and Yemen.

82. The International Donors' Conference for the Development and Reconstruction of Darfur organized by the Organization of the Islamic Conference in March 2010 was among the recent examples of its successful humanitarian initiatives. The Conference had yielded pledges worth US$ 852 million and paved the way for the establishment of a development bank in Darfur.

83. The humanitarian situation in Gaza was a major concern. Since September 2009, the Humanitarian Department had facilitated the passage through various channels to the Gaza Strip of humanitarian assistance to a value of US$ 14 million. That assistance had been a coordinated effort on the part of numerous civil society organizations in member States, Europe and the United States. The Organization of the Islamic Conference believed that the Gaza Strip would need continued assistance in order to return life to normal even after the Israeli blockade was completely lifted. Consequently, the Organization had prepared a special programme valued at US$ 100 million for the rehabilitation of Palestinian society.

84. It was obvious that strong political on the part of the international community was required in terms of assistance to Gaza. The humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip would not be resolved without the complete

lifting of the Israeli blockade, opening of the crossings, and free circulation of humanitarian assistance and the materials necessary for rebuilding the destroyed infrastructure.

85. The humanitarian situation in Somalia was also among the priorities of the Organization, and it attached the utmost importance to the immediate implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding which it had signed with the World Food Programme on the subject of food aid distribution there.

86. Recently, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Organization's General Secretariat had agreed to work together with other major humanitarian partners to develop a joint humanitarian strategy which would include, as a start, areas of common interest such as advocacy, resource mobilization, coordination, capacity-building and disaster preparedness and prevention.

87. Moreover, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and the Organization had identified a number of ways to strengthen their already excellent cooperation. The Organization's Secretary General had drawn the attention of its member States to the Agency's precarious financial situation and the risk of suspension of services to the Palestine refugees before the end of 2010 unless it received more support.

88. **Ms. Milovanovic** (World Health Organization) said that her organization was concerned by such additional challenges as the increasingly ageing population and the so called "silent emergency" of people suffering from non-communicable diseases, including cancer, stroke and diabetes. They and other problems would require the international community to adjust its approach to the notions of vulnerability and population in need.

89. Strengthening coordination of humanitarian assistance was of critical importance to all players working with emergencies, particularly in health. It had been seen time and again how the generosity and willingness of multiple humanitarian actors to contribute to emergency response could, in fact, hinder or complicate health relief activities. Haiti was a case in point, where some 600 entities had come under the Health Cluster banner following the earthquake. The scale of that example underscored the critical need for coordination in the health sector so as to save lives, treat the sick and wounded, improve levels of health care and make the best use of available resources. At the same time, the struggle to find enough resources to meet needs added its own burden. The financial crisis weighed heavily on all actors: Governments, United Nations bodies and humanitarian agencies. Meanwhile, human suffering continued.

90. To address those concerns, the World Health Organization was building inter-agency rosters of coordinators, information and communications officers, and technical experts and was training its in-country representatives to lead the Health Cluster. It was involving ministries of health and other local partners in the coordination function. It was also investing in the capacity-building of its partners, through measures such as staff development programmes, establishing a rapid response account, and developing and disseminating standard operating procedures.

91. **Mr. Iyer** (United Nations Children's Fund) observed that perhaps the main lesson that Haiti's disaster had taught was that affected people, besides being victims, were resilient, resourceful and proud: They were the most important actors when it came to building a better future.

92. For the international organizations, the challenges of humanitarian action during times of crisis were in some ways very distinct from those that they faced in development contexts. As they worked in situations where the humanitarian principles of impartiality, neutrality and independence were challenged, the imperative to assist those in need obliged the international organizations to devise innovative strategies to maintain programmes in very high risk contexts. That implied a need to conduct a careful analysis of the risks and then, in order to reduce them, to adopt strategies ranging from gaining acceptance within communities to strengthening national institutions so that they could uphold rights and maintain the rule of law.

93. But in other ways the core challenges that the international organizations faced in humanitarian actions were very similar to those they faced when working to promote sustainable peace and development. A major issue was the centrality of gender equality and the empowerment of women as a key strategy to ensure both equitable sustainable development and accountable humanitarian response. In both humanitarian action and development, it had

become evident that a focus on being prepared for crises and a deliberate effort to reduce disaster risk should be at the core of efforts to break the vicious cycle of chronic vulnerability. National capacity development was a fundamental strategy for ensuring wide coverage in basic services and large-scale impact in terms of results for children and women.

94. **Mr. Janz** (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)) said that the humanitarian community, in keeping with the guiding principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, was persisting in its endeavour to protect and assist populations in need in crisis situations. In conflict areas, however, access to beneficiaries was often limited and the security of both victims of violence and humanitarian workers could be threatened. The Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees continued to count on States to help address that predicament.

95. UNHCR had identified four key areas for action to counter the problem. First, operations management could be improved through increased support for national and local partners. Second, staffing of high-risk operations could be enhanced through greater emphasis on political analysis, communications and the negotiation and language skills of staff. Third, the security of staff and beneficiaries could be improved in its "soft" aspects, such as through information gathering and processing and analysis of specific operational contexts to complement physical security measures.

96. Fourth, communication strategies could be developed in various ways: building a closer relationship with host populations; emphasizing the recruitment and training of national communications staff who spoke the language of host communities; and making use of traditional channels of communication and authority, such as elders, as well as mainstream media.

97. According to the Office's latest statistics, for the first time more refugees were living in cities and towns than in camps. Most lived in slums and shanty towns with limited or no access to education, health care and other essential services. The new urban refugee policy of UNHCR called on States, municipal authorities, civil society and humanitarian partners to join forces to protect and assist such persons. The needs of urban refugees had been addressed at the High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges in December 2009 and the recent annual consultati with NGOs, and UNHCR was also organizing workshop in July with staff from seven cit designated as pilot sites for the policy.

98. Furthermore, UNHCR continued to support work of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Ta Force on Meeting Humanitarian Challenges in Urb Areas and was deepening its engagement with Unit Nations Development Assistance Framew (UNDAF) initiatives aimed at local populations.

99. Promoting gender equality at all levels w essential in addressing humanitarian challeng UNHCR had successfully built the awareness a capacity of its own staff to promote gender equal among refugees and displaced and stateless perso through its age, gender and diversity mainstreami approach. In all aspects of its work, UNHCR sought achieve gender equality in decision-making process Its operations promoted regular participat assessments among the beneficiaries of its assistance identify priorities which were then fed into joi planning exercises with its partners.

100. Partnerships were extremely important addressing any humanitarian emergency and were fundamental element of the UNHCR modus operan Discussions at the UNHCR annual consultations wi NGOs on the theme "National Partners: Providers First Resort" had confirmed the key role played l local partners in spearheading responses emergencies. UNHCR also liaised closely with sister United Nations agencies and with t International Red Cross and Red Crescent Moveme and constantly sought new ways to enhan cooperation and mutual support.

101. **Mr. Falatar** (United Nations Educationa Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO welcomed the recent adoption by the Gener Assembly of the landmark resolution on the right education in emergency situations. The resolutio recognized that conflicts and natural disasters we among the major impediments to achievi internationally agreed education targets such Millennium Development Goal 2 and the goals of t Education for All initiative. In post-conflict situation a failure to invest in education undermined t fulfilment of fundamental rights and placed alread affected and vulnerable populations at further risk.

102. Through the education cluster of the United Nations Inter-Agency Standing Committee and the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies, UNESCO contributed to a holistic approach to the early revitalization of education services in many conflict- and disaster-affected countries. Member States increasingly turned to UNESCO for specialized interventions to help address critical gaps during the humanitarian phase of post-conflict and post-natural-disaster response. He provided examples of its contributions in post-crisis settings in the areas of communications, culture, science and disaster risk reduction.

103. All UNESCO interventions were designed to complement the vital work of the major humanitarian response agencies and to be aligned with longer-term national development strategies. The response to the earthquake in Haiti was a case in point. Furthermore, the continued strengthening of humanitarian coordination mechanisms was absolutely essential, and UNESCO fully supported the main humanitarian actors, donors and member States which advocated a holistic approach to humanitarian response which covered education and other relevant gaps.

104. **The President** invited the Council to turn its attention to draft resolution E/2010/L.15, entitled "Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations" submitted by himself, on the basis of informal consultations. He expressed his deep gratitude to Ms. Kathryn Yarlett of Australia and Mr. Denny Abdy of Indonesia, who had ably led the negotiations on the document, which he understood now enjoyed consensus. He had been informed that the draft resolution contained no programme budget implications.

105. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Council) pointed out that the printed text of the draft resolution erroneously stated that it had been submitted by Chile, rather than by the Vice-President.

106. *Draft resolution E/2010/L.15 was adopted.*

107. **Mr. Holmes** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator) expressed his appreciation to everyone who had participated in the debate, panels and side events for their very valuable input during the humanitarian affairs segment and assured Member States that his Office would respond in due course to all the points and issues raised.

108. Reviewing the topics addressed at the panel discussion on humanitarian assistance operations in highly hazardous or insecure and unsafe environments, he said that participants had agreed, inter alia, that humanitarian actions must strive to comply with humanitarian principles; that consideration should be given to using national and local capacities without transferring risk from international to local staff; and that adhering to established codes of conduct and ensuring complete transparency in programme implementation were essential.

109. Clearly, the efforts of humanitarian actors would be fruitless without support from Member States and host Governments, which should adhere, and promote adherence, to the basic principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and operational independence, and should provide security themselves as a primary responsibility. They should also understand that it was imperative for humanitarian actors to enter into dialogue with all relevant stakeholders. Last but not least, Member States, as donors, should provide predictable and long-term resources for the safety and security of humanitarian operations.

110. He emphasized that nothing related to humanitarian assistance posed a significant challenge to national sovereignty and territorial integrity. Humanitarian actors must not and could not challenge those fundamental building blocks of the international community. Dialogue with non-State armed groups about humanitarian access did not affect the legal or political status of those groups in any way.

111. As had been observed in the current debate, humanitarian crises and needs were changing and evolving, and the distinction between humanitarian assistance and development was in many long-standing emergencies even more artificial than before. To address chronic vulnerability, Governments and development actors must address root causes and structural issues with the same urgency they devoted to emergency humanitarian response.

112. The debate on the current agenda item had highlighted how the multiplicity of global challenges had a significant impact on the humanitarian landscape worldwide, and the day's deliberations had shown that the challenges were far beyond the capacities, capabilities and mandates of humanitarian organizations.

113. There appeared to be broad agreement about the need to focus more on capacity-building for prevention, preparedness and response at the local, national and regional levels. He was pleased to learn that increasing numbers of countries were approaching the World Bank for investments to promote prevention rather than reconstruction.

114. He was encouraged that most Member States had acknowledged the importance of efforts to strengthen the coordination of humanitarian assistance. First and foremost was the cluster approach, but it was also necessary to strengthen humanitarian leadership on the ground and improve humanitarian needs assessments, including by taking into account gender- and age-disaggregated data. Member States had also called for more investment in capacity-building and disaster preparedness.

115. He very much welcomed the support expressed by most Member States for sufficient capacity to coordinate international humanitarian assistance. In the current difficult financial climate, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and other international humanitarian actors needed all the support, including financial, that Member States could provide.

116. After briefly summarizing the issues discussed at various side events as part of the current segment, he said that many concerns had been expressed about the effects of the economic and financial crisis on humanitarian funding. On 14 July OCHA had launched the midyear review of the 2010 consolidated humanitarian appeals. Thus far in 2010 there had been 16 consolidated appeals and two flash appeals. Humanitarian funding requirements had increased by US$ 1.5 billion since the start of the year, bringing the total target for 2010 to US$ 9.5 billion. It was a strikingly positive fact that donors had thus far pledged 49 per cent of that amount.

117. However, unmet humanitarian requirements were also at their highest level ever at some US$ 4.8 billion. He appealed to Governments to maintain their generosity and continue contributing, and to ensure that the various humanitarian sectors were funded more evenly, in line with the approach of the Central Emergency Response Fund.

118. The consensus resolution just adopted by the Council reaffirmed the importance of access and humanitarian principles and acknowledged the importance of effective emergency rules and procedures, as well as common needs assessments. However, the resolution did not operationalize the themes of the current year's segment. For example, more normative guidance on operating effectively in dangerous environments would be welcome. With all the looming challenges ahead, the more that Member States "owned" a shared vision for international humanitarian assistance the better. He therefore hoped that the discussion of the year's main themes would mark a starting point for their debates and legislative efforts, not an end.

119. In conclusion, he expressed the hope that the ideas and enthusiasm generated during the segment would be translated into action for the benefit of all people in need. In the end, what counted was how many lives could be saved, not how many fine words could be uttered.

120. **The President** thanked all Member States, United Nations agencies and humanitarian organizations that had contributed to the 2010 humanitarian affairs segment. A special note of acknowledgment should go to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. The session would not have been as successful without its efforts in organizing the formal panels and coordinating the different side events. In particular, the two panels had provided a valuable opportunity to listen to experts and practitioners, with perspectives from headquarters, the field and academia, and thereby had helped the Council to be better informed on the important challenges that were increasingly impacting humanitarian assistance.

121. On behalf of the Council and on behalf of member States, observers and all other stakeholders, he warmly thanked Sir John Holmes, the Humanitarian Affairs Coordinator, for his stewardship over the past few years, his commitment to humanitarian principles, and last but not least his practical and pragmatic style.

122. In conclusion, he declared the humanitarian affairs segment closed.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.